Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC) is an independent statewide nonpartisan advocacy organization dedicated to advancing policies and legislation that ensures that all children across the Commonwealth have the resources and services they need to thrive and live healthy lives. PPC is the Pennsylvania member of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Network which utilizes data to track demographic shifts and promote improved policies to benefit children and families nationwide. PPC focuses on five core policy areas: Child Welfare, Early Childhood Education, Health Care, Home Visiting, and K-12 Education.

In 2017, PPC celebrated its 25th anniversary, and shortly thereafter underwent a successful leadership transition of a long-tenured CEO. A year into her position, the new CEO, Kari King and the Board, believed the time was right to engage in a comprehensive strategic planning process. They sought a bold long-term vision and three-year blueprint that builds on PPC's success and ensures long-term sustainability.

The leadership enlisted Julia Ritchie Consulting to design and steward a strategic planning process that would engage key stakeholders and utilize a data-driven approach to build on PPC's strong foundation of data and analysis. Working in partnership, the consultant and staff interviewed over two dozen external stakeholders including coalition partners, legislators, and policy experts. In addition, the staff completed an exhaustive trend analysis that included investigating the needs and potential policy implications for a range of issues outside their core focus areas, e.g., foster care, mental health, food security and more. The findings from the stakeholder interviews affirmed PPC's stellar reputation and underscored three organizational assets:

- PPC’s legislative access and influence across both sides of the aisle;
- PPC’s fact telling and data analysis is critical to the field; and
- PPC is a respected coalition partner, field leader and consensus builder.

This three-year plan is accompanied by a more detailed two-year public policy agenda. Also included is a projected budget and revenue plan to support the successful implementation of this plan. Simultaneous to the strategic planning process, PPC enlisted ART + Strategy (Anne Townsend) to conduct a fundraising analysis for building individual and corporate giving capacity. These documents, together, provide a comprehensive roadmap for how PPC intends to carry out its mission and advance its vision that every child living in Pennsylvania has an equal opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

1More on key findings can be found in the appendix to this document.
**STRATEGIC PLAN CONSIDERATIONS**

PPC has a long successful track record of advocating for children at the state-level. PPC’s leadership has built a strong financial reserve and consistently expanded its institutional partners. At the onset of this planning process, the Board and staff recognized that PPC is a healthy and vibrant organization. As such, the focus of this three-year strategic plan is on how to “go from good to great.” Taking the long-view, PPC did not anticipate that the core policy areas of the organization were going to change significantly. Instead, the planning process focused on how to deepen and strengthen PPC’s work, and where over the next three years they might make strategic investments to leverage their impact and build stronger infrastructure and sustainability.

**THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

The strategic planning process got underway in the winter of 2020. Consequently, the bulk of the planning process took place in the midst of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. To the credit of the PPC staff and Board, the planning process proceeded without significant disruption. That said, the impact of COVID-19 has, and will continue to have, an extraordinary impact in the lives of children and families in the United States and Pennsylvania, particularly on low-income families and communities of color. With anticipated reductions to the Pennsylvania state budget of more than $4.5m, the financial implications of COVID are potentially devastating. This strategic plan takes into account a potential economic recession coupled with the increase in need for the very services and supports that PPC seeks to provide for vulnerable children and their families. While PPC continues to be committed to its five core priority areas, the first priority of this plan anticipates expanding the reach of all programs in direct response to COVID.

**DEEPENING THEIR COMMITMENT TO RACE EQUITY**

For more than a year the staff and Board of PPC have been thoughtfully engaged in a process to embed a race equity lens into their work both internally and externally. Throughout the planning process, the consultant and the planning team committed to ensuring race equity was lifted up and examined as the team forged their long-term strategic priorities and strategies. PPC staff and Board recognize that the language of this work is highly charged and the context for this work is increasingly polarized and politicized. Therefore, this requires PPC to sensitively navigate the tension between their commitment to becoming an antiracist organization while maintaining their commitment to being a nonpartisan organization. The second priority of this plan specifically focuses on deepening PPC’s commitment to race equity and addressing the long-term social determinants of poverty on children and families. In doing so, PPC will enlist consulting experts to support the organization to continue in their learning journey. At the same time, PPC will actively seek opportunities to address racial disparities through their data analysis and reporting, by engaging consumer’s input to inform their policy positions, and to expanding and strengthening their coalition work to lift up the stories of those most vulnerable and communities of color.
OUR VISION...

EVERY CHILD LIVING IN PENNSYLVANIA HAS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE AND TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

PPC 2021-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children’s 2021-2023 Strategic Plan focuses on four strategic priorities:

I. Maximizing PPC’s Short-term Impact on Children & Families Affected by the 2020 Health Pandemic (COVID-19)

II. Deepening PPC’s Commitment to Race Equity and Mitigating the Long-term Social Determinants of Poverty on Children & Families

III. Engaging Consumer Voice in the Design and Promotion of Policies that Protect Children and Families

IV. Leveraging Communications to Effectively Engage PPC’s Core Audiences
I. MAXIMIZING PPC’S SHORT-TERM IMPACT ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE 2020 HEALTH PANDEMIC (COVID-19)

Strategic Priority Description (Problem Statement)
For every child to reach their full potential, PPC must acknowledge the current environment, along with the imaginable future, and define our role as part of the solution to aid families and children within our five policy areas through coalition work and partnerships, both current and new. Recognizing the effects of an unprecedented health pandemic and resulting economic crisis, the opportunities to promote antiracist supports during a critical turning point in our country, and the need to remain non-partisan within an ever-increasing partisan environment, PPC must respond by educating on and advocating for data-informed policy and funding improvements.

2021-2023 Strategic Planning Goal
By December 2023, PPC will have expanded priorities within our five policy areas and educated on and advocated for funding and policy improvements to support children and families most impacted by the 2020 health pandemic and resulting economic downturn.

As a result of the health pandemic we will consider an expanded set of interdependent issues within our five policy priorities, including:
• Mental health
• Food insecurity
• Access to technology
• Broadband access
• Transportation
• Housing
• Homelessness
• School-age child care
• Telehealth
• Immunization
• CPS/GPS referrals

Recommended Strategies
I.I Advocate for federal and state stimulus funding to address the additional need within our existing policy areas and new topics as a result of the pandemic.
   a. Child Care: More families are income-eligible for child care subsidies and more funding is needed to support keeping the system afloat during the economic crisis.
   b. Home Visiting: Additional federal funding of the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program to support technological and training needs for virtual home visits.
   c. Health Care: Increased federal matching funds (FMAP) that will benefit children and families using Medicaid and CHIP for health insurance coverage.

I.II Create fact sheets and toolkits for advocacy partners to:
   a. Reach families who are newly income-eligible for safety net programs due to the economic downturn.
   b. Educate families about how to keep children healthy during uncertain times.
      a. For example, similar to Ohio, work with AAP and early learning partners to encourage families to take their children in for timely immunizations and developmental milestones.

I.III Integrate COVID impacts, including the resulting economic downturn, while setting PPC’s upcoming two-year policy agenda that is scheduled for the fall of 2020.
   a. Educate new legislators for the 2021-22 session in both parties about PPC’s policy agenda, including impacts of COVID-19 on Pennsylvania children and families.

I.IV Layer COVID-specific data, disaggregated where possible, across our existing five policy areas to identify where we can maximize our impact. This can be used to determine whether we need to:
   a. Adjust legislative targets;
   b. Adjust specific policy strategies including outreach; and,
   c. Identify community engagement opportunities based on geographic areas and communities of color that may be hardest hit by the health pandemic and resulting economic downturn.

2Antiracist: opposing the systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic and political advantage of another, and promoting racial tolerance. Dr. Ibram X. Kendi writes, “The opposite of ‘racist’ isn’t ‘not racist.’ It is ‘antiracist.’”
II. DEEPENING PPC’S COMMITMENT TO RACE EQUITY AND MITIGATING THE LONG-TERM SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF POVERTY ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Strategic Priority Description (Problem Statement)
PPC intends to deepen its commitment to racial equity (both internally and externally) and address the long-term causes and effects of singular and generational poverty while maintaining our partnerships and relationships with stakeholders, funders and legislators.

2021-2023 Strategic Planning Goal
PPC will be fully engaged in the ongoing process of becoming an antiracist organization and demonstrate a commitment to mitigating the adverse effects caused by singular and generational poverty and institutional racism by ensuring that every child in the commonwealth is provided equal opportunity and access to appropriate services as a continuum across our policy areas.

Recommended Strategies
II.1 Develop an identified internal process and workplan which creates an environment that values race equity and identifies and elevates the needs of systematically disadvantaged populations, which includes the operationalizing of process.

a. Create internal policies that are applicable to staff and the board, which creates an environment that is open, honest, safe and consistently elevating the topic of racism. This will include shared language, universal principles and defined Race Equity and Inclusion (REI) competencies for PPC. Additionally, a formal onboarding process will be developed in written format to accompany the organization policy manual, which will be provided to both new staff and the board; this will include a formalized training or technical assistance process to assist with reaching required levels of competency. This includes a formal training of the board.

b. Work with a variety of REI technical assistance providers to walk alongside PPC and assist on the journey of driving the work to becoming an antiracist organization.

c. Reach and actively recruit people from underrepresented (racially, geographically, economically) groups to have them join in our board. This will occur as board members circulate on and off.

PPC staff and Board are committed the following:

- Maintaining meaningful initiatives to promote racial equity in the organization and support existent racial literacy education for members of PPC.
- Raising and maintaining awareness of bias in members of PPC and take specific steps to reduce bias.
- Engaging in productive working relationships with people across race and identities.
- Leveraging our power when appropriate to mitigate racial inequality in all its forms and provide support to people of color on their negative experiences related to racism.
- Consistently using and applying a race equity lens to our strategies and our operations.
- Meaningfully engaging with consumers and those directly impacted to solicit their experience and input into the development of our program strategies.

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II. DEEPENING PPC’S COMMITMENT TO RACE EQUITY AND MITIGATING THE LONG-TERM SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF POVERTY ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES
(CONTINUED)

II.II Incorporate race equity visibly into PPC’s policy agenda by naming and pursuing investments in policies that promote equity and seek to eliminate disparities caused by systemic racism.

a. Create internal outcome measures that ensure we are consistently elevating racial equity through internal dialogue and policy planning; specifically, this will include concrete mechanisms in weekly policy documents, outcome dashboards, policy planning spreadsheets/meetings and/or board meeting presentations.

b. Create a standard operating procedure that disaggregated data will be requested from the administration. Use processes like backmapping to identify the root causes to identify and inform policymaking decisions.

c. Research the issue of data suppression and whether PPC has opportunity to consider additional data agreements with state government.

II.III Identify a strategic process to utilize coalitions and organizational partnerships to obtain consumer feedback relative to race equity and inclusion in a meaningful way, that elevates the lived experiences of the populations for which we are seeking to improve outcomes.

a. Identify which coalitions and partners are willing to cooperate, engage and elevate the needs of systematically disadvantaged populations.

b. With those identified REI champion organizations who also have access to communities of color and those that are in need of increased access to services, act as a partner and liaison in accessing consumer feedback.

c. As a result of the identification and partnership, create a strategized plan and operating procedures that will guide PPC on how to receive and utilize the consumer feedback in policymaking.

II.IV Establish an external communications plan that elevates the needs of systematically disadvantaged populations which is non-confrontational and seeks to achieve the policies that we seek to implement.

a. Legislatively, reach out to members such as those serving on the Legislative Black Caucus or lawmakers who are willing to be champions of served underrepresented populations.

b. In consultation with the communications team, identify ways to be more direct in our messaging about the needs of underrepresented populations.

c. Embed PPC’s REI principles in external products.
III. ENGAGING CONSUMER VOICE IN THE DESIGN AND PROMOTION OF POLICIES THAT PROTECT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Strategic Priority Description (Problem Statement)

Drawing from the Pritzker roundtable process where PPC engaged stakeholders, including consumers across the Commonwealth, PPC is committed to gathering consumer\(^3\) and family input. PPC believes there is enormous value to engaging consumers to help in developing sound policy positions. It is committed to a process of working with its partners to thoughtfully engage consumers while maintaining its status as a data-driven statewide advocacy organization.

2021-2023 Strategic Planning Goal

By 2023, PPC will be successfully utilizing a variety of strategies and engaging a robust network of partners and advocates to ensure direct consumer feedback and data is captured to better inform our policy priorities.

Recommended Strategies

III.I Work with community partners to engage consumers in feedback on various policy areas.

a. Build and utilize PPC partner mapping database system to identify partners in each policy area that can help PPC in their community engagement outreach.

b. Provide pass-through funding to support consumer engagement strategies with community partners. Some opportunities may not require funding to develop joint projects (ex. legislative roundtables with key members/constituents).

c. Expand PPC’s network of community partners working with consumers, focusing on including organizations that have connections to hard-to-reach communities and populations, with a focus on racial equity.

d. Consider a partnership outreach coordinator (consultant) with relationships in geographically/racially/economically/politically diverse areas to identify community-based organizations (CBOs) to aid in engagement outreach on an as needed basis.

III.II Develop and operationalize standard operating procedures for thoughtful and effective engagement of consumers, consisting of both internal and external standards.

a. Develop an ethical data collection practices guide, which should include protocols for using consumer data.

b. Develop a process and procedures manual on how PPC will approach each consumer engagement outreach. See attached for outlined steps and an example.

c. Create templates that can be used by our partners to collect data, including consumers’ stories.

\(^3\)Examples of consumer: parent, kin, youth, provider, teacher, home visitor
IV. LEVERAGING COMMUNICATIONS TO EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE PPC’S CORE AUDIENCES

Strategic Priority Description (Problem Statement)
PPC is seeking to develop and maintain a communications strategy that will enable PPC to produce consistent, more frequent, targeted and tailored communications to reach our core audiences of policymakers, stakeholder partners and financial supporters. At the same time, PPC is seeking to amplify its reputation as a go-to source for data and research for the media on the issues that we care about.

2021-2023 Strategic Planning Goal
By December 2023, PPC will provide more frequent and tailored communications specific to our identified core audiences (policymakers, stakeholders and financial supporters) so they are fully engaged and informed on our work. Stakeholder partners will be utilized as a strategy to directly provide consumers/providers with our information as needed. PPC will also have a well-established presence and higher visibility with key media contacts as a resource for children’s issues in the state.

Recommended Strategies

IV.I Build out systems and infrastructure to create robust communications capacity.
   a. Develop an approach to hiring additional communications support and/or engaging with a contract firm, with clear deliverables/responsibilities/goals listed for each possibility.
      i. Identify approach to contracting with communications firm specifically for media relations and pitching, as well as short-term strategizing on how to pivot messaging due to COVID-19.
   b. Build out PPC’s communications database (Salsa lists) to enable segmented/targeted communications to our key audiences.
   c. Develop a process to ensure communications database remains up to date moving forward.
   d. Develop a 12-month communications plan with specific goals for each month that contains launch of PPC products, earned media opportunities, social media strategies, fundraising activities, etc.
   e. Secure media training for President and CEO with key staff.

IV.II Expand and enhance PPC’s digital engagement strategy.
   a. Dedicate revenue for Facebook boosted posts and sophisticated ad campaigns to promote PPC policy issues/deliverables using geotargeting. This will also increase followers and drive traffic to our website.
   b. Increase President and CEO’s and government affairs staff public presence on digital media.
   c. Focus social media content on PPC’s reaction/opinion to legislative or administrative announcements and events that impact our policy areas, tagging decision-makers to increase engagement and visibility.

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IV. **LEVERAGING COMMUNICATIONS TO EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE PPC’S CORE AUDIENCES (CONTINUED)**

IV.III Increase engagement with legislators, stakeholder partners and financial supporters.
   a. Re-engineer board policy update calls and host quarterly with targeted audiences (namely foundation staff and major donors; potentially for other stakeholder partners) – determine whether these are held separately from board calls or together; also consider surveying board on how we can improve policy update calls (achieving appropriate level of detail).
   b. Targeted, regularly scheduled publications to policymakers (legislators and legislative staff; administration staff). Material presented is higher-level and more visual in nature than (a) above.
   c. Examine sponsorships of go-to policymaker programs/publications to increase coverage of PPC’s issues and visibility of key staff.

IV.IV Develop and implement donor engagement strategy.
   a. Further develop events either as fundraisers or as cultivation/stewarding activities in support of fundraising.
   b. Grow and further engage individual and corporate donors in the work of PPC with the aim of raising $140,000 starting in 2022 with a plan for continued growth annually thereafter.
   c. Communicate with donors and stakeholders in a consistent manner to ensure they are aware of the impact their gift (or involvement) is making in the lives of youth helped by PPC.
   d. Strengthen and retool the internal development function to ensure the smooth functioning of the growing development effort.

IV.V Retool and redesign signature reports.
   a. Design integrated communications for PPC’s strategic plan, two-year policy plan, and fundraising plan.
   b. Design and develop new outcome map and strategic dashboard.
   c. Increase use of digital distribution and infographics derived from products that can be used in other ways (e.g. social media posts).
   d. Redesign annual State of the Child report.
   e. Determine whether PPC is able to produce a report specific to race equity, or if this can be part of the redesign of State of the Child.
### APPENDICES:

**EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS KEY FINDINGS**

The consultant and staff conducted individual interviews with more than two dozen external stakeholders including: coalition partners, legislators, funders, and policy experts. These findings along with a comprehensive trend analysis were shared with the Board and Staff. Below is a high-level summary of the key findings.

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<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>• PPC has an exceptional reputation across stakeholder groups</td>
<td>• Need for more consistent communications and engagement with</td>
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<td>• Access and influence across both sides of the aisle</td>
<td>core audiences</td>
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<td>• Fact telling and data analysis</td>
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<td>• Coalition partner and consensus builder</td>
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<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Vacuum in leadership in K-12 coalition(s); Supreme Court</td>
<td>• State budget cuts</td>
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<td>ruling on Education funding</td>
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<td>• Deepen federal advocacy efforts</td>
<td>• COVID impact, e.g., overwhelm system capacity to meet need,</td>
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<td>• Lift up stark disparities in the impact of COVID on</td>
<td>economic recession, small nonprofits not able to survive...</td>
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<td>communities of color</td>
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